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Superintendent
Greenwich Public Schools

RE: Second Grade Remote Classroom Incident

I want to address our community regarding an incident which happened in our remote second grade this past Monday morning. Some misinformation regarding the situation, which we outline below, has been shared in both media outlets and on social media. As this is an ongoing investigation involving personnel, the District is limited as to what details can be shared. However, below is the information which can be shared regarding the incident, and includes our commitment to address these concerns and take appropriate action.

Many individuals have seen or heard about the animated video shared during a lesson on social and emotional learning. Our second grade SEL curriculum follows the Second Step Program, which includes a unit on feelings. However, this video was not part of the instructional materials of the approved program, and it was not appropriate for our GPS second grade classroom. Due to the nature of the video, the District immediately alerted the Department of Children and Families (DCF), as we do whenever we believe students may have been exposed to material or situations that may warrant a follow-up. In this instance, DCF has let the district know that they did not accept this case for a DCF investigation, as it did not meet the statutory definition of abuse or neglect.

To reiterate, this video is not part of our GPS curriculum resources or materials. We are taking this situation very seriously, and an internal investigation is ongoing. The District is continuing to communicate directly with the affected families, has apologized for any questions or concerns that were raised with their children and has offered support from GPS Staff Psychologists.

GPS has a long-standing history of delivering a standards-based curriculum, and we have not changed our path. As educators, we recognize that it is our role as classroom leaders to facilitate classroom dialogue that, while open and honest, does not push any political ideologies or inappropriate content. We continue to partner with our staff, PTA and other community partners to address instructional questions, concerns, and insights, and are working towards more transparency in what is being taught in the classroom.

We are committed to the highest level of professionalism in ensuring that materials and resources are properly reviewed and approved prior to delivery to students. In parallel, we are working as a district administration to better equip our staff with professional development, training, and access to resources for their respective instructional needs. Additionally, we are reviewing our policies and regulations to ensure these types of incidents do not happen again.

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